

A NEW INVESTIGATION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC
POSITION OF THE BÁILÁN CAPITAL OF THE
TŪYÙHÚN

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ABSTRACT

Báilán, of the Tǔyùhún Kingdom, is an extremely important place name in the ethnic history of ancient China. Throughout the more than 900 year medieval period of Chinese history—the Wèi, Jin, Northern and Southern dynasties, Táng, Sòng, and Yuán eras (third to thirteenth

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centuries)—the name Báilán remained in historical materials, demonstrating the name's historical significance. Scholars have discussed the geographic position of Báilán since the 1920s, but no consensus has emerged. In this paper we undertake a comprehensive investigation of the issue. We carried out related field work in Dūlán County and the Qaidam (Cháidámù) area of Hǎixī Prefecture, Qīnghǎi Province and interviewed knowledgeable elders of the region. We also consulted the results of recent archeological excavations. We advance explanations for the terms 'Báilán Qiāng' and 'Báilán Mountains', and suggest a location of the ancient city of Báilán.

KEY WORDS

Báilán, Qiāng, Tǔyùhún, Qīnghǎi, Hǎixī

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH ON THE GEOGRAPHIC POSITION OF BÁILÁN

The appearance of the name 'Báilán' is intimately related to the ancient Tǔyùhún Kingdom of the Qīnghǎi-Tibet Plateau in the period of the Northern and Southern dynasties (fourth-sixth centuries AD). As the *Zizhitōngjiàn* (chapter ninety, Jin Records Twelve, first year of the Jiànwǔ reign of emperor Yuán 317AD) states, the Tǔyùhún

reside by mountains in the west. Following the turmoil of the Yǒngjià Period (ca. 317), they subsequently crossed the Lóng Region (of Gānsù Province) and went west; residing west of the Táo River and as far as Báilán; their area extends for 1,000 里.

Báilán was the reliable, defendable base area of the Tǔyùhún people, which allowed them to achieve statehood.

In the beginning of the fourth century AD, the Tǔyùhún khan, the oldest son (by his second wife) of Shèguī, the leader of the Mùróng Tribe of the Liǎodōng Xiānbēi,² quarreled over water resources with his younger brother, the son (of Shèguī's formal wife) Mùróng Wěi. Consequently, the Khan led more than 1,700 households west to the Yīnshān Region of Inner Mongolia. In 317 AD (the last year of the Yǒngjià reign of the Western Jin), he descended south from the Yīnshān Region, across the Lóng Mountains into southern Gānsù, gradually subjugating and incorporating the various Qiāng and Dī tribes of the present Sìchuān-Gānsù-Qīnghǎi border area, and came to control the region. After further advances he eventually controlled a large area

² {The Xiānbēi were a nomadic people active in what is now the northeast of China. Though little about their initial history is known, they likely spoke a form of early Altaic language.}

including Qaidam, the area around Qīnghǎi Lake, and the Qiāng and Qiěmò areas of Xīnjiāng. At its largest, the Tǔyùhún territory extended 1,000 kilometers from north to south and 3,000 kilometers from east to west. The Tǔyùhún opened the Southern Silk Road which flourished from the period of the Northern-Southern dynasties up to the mid-Táng period (third to eighth centuries). They also made important contributions in the fields of metallurgy, bridge construction,³ architecture,⁴ and horse-breeding.⁵ The famous historian, Fàn Wénlán (1949), highly praised these accomplishments in his *A Brief History of China* (*Zhōngguó tōngshǐ jiǎnbiān*) writing: "The Qiāng nationality's establishment of the Tǔyùhún Kingdom in Qīnghǎi is a shining hallmark of social development."⁶ However, the Tǔyùhún would not have been established on the coordinates of history without Báilán.

Tǔyùhún history has at least five references to 'the protection of Báilán' (*bǎo báilán* 保白兰) in Chinese historical documents: *Cěfǔ yuánguī*, *The Compendium of the*

³ The Tǔyùhún are credited with building the Dàmǔ Bridge over the Yellow River in Xúnhuà Salar Autonomous County, Qīnghǎi Province.

⁴ They are known for the 'Four Great Garrison Cities of the Tǔyùhún' (Tǔyùhún sì dà shù chéng), the ancient city of Xiāngrìdé (which the authors contend is the city of Báilán), and Fúsi City.

⁵ The Tǔyùhún were known for breeding the Qīnghǎi piebald horse (*Qīnghǎi cōng*) and the famed dancing horses of the Táng Dynasty.

⁶ With regards to the theory that the Qiāng nationality established the Tǔyùhún state, Lǐ Wénshí (2001) in *Ancient Lands in the West and Qiāng-Bodic Culture* (*Xīchuí gǔdì yǔ qiāng-zāng wénhuà*) refutes this theory. The authors support Lǐ's position that the Tǔyùhún Kingdom was established by the Tǔyùhún people.

Five Dynasties (Wǔdài huìyào), *The Sui History (Suí shū)*, *The Old and New Táng Histories (Jiù táng shū, Xīn táng shū)*, and in the *Zīzhìtōngjiàn*.

The first record of protecting Báilán occurs in the year 329, in the fourth year of the Xiánhé Reign of the Chéng Emperor of the Jin Dynasty. Tǔyán (r. 317-329), the eldest son of the Tǔyùhún Khan, was assassinated by the Qiāng leader, Jiāng Cóng. On his deathbed, he gave instructions to his subordinates for handling the state's affairs:

After I die, and the coffin has been arranged, send it far to the protected Báilán. The area around Báilán is both strategically important and the locals are weak and easily controlled (*Běi shǐ - tǔyùhún zhuàn* ch. ninety-six).

In the same year, Tǔyán's son, Yèyán (r. 329-351), formally established political authority in Báilán and, taking his grandfather's name as the name of the country, established the Tǔyùhún Kingdom.

The second record of protecting Báilán occurs in the year 398, when the sixth ruler of the Tǔyùhún, Shìpí, angered Fúqǐqiánguī, King of the Western Qín, by refusing his bestowal of the rank 'Báilán King'. Qiánguī led 20,000 cavalymen to denounce the offense, routing Shìpí's troops at Dùzhōuchuān.

Shìpí escaped to the protection of the Báilán Mountains. He sent an emissary to ask forgiveness, presenting local products in tribute, and his son, Dàngqǐ, as a hostage (*Jīnshū*, ch. twenty-five).

Only then was peace restored. Afterwards, Fúqǐqiánguī showed favor by offering one of his clan's daughters in marriage to Shìpí.

The third record of protecting Báilán occurs in 417 when the Western Qín dispatched the Āndōng General, Mùyì,

to lead an army to attack the eighth ruler of the Tǔyùhún, Shùluògān. More than 5,000 Tǔyùhún were taken as captives. In defeat, Shùluògān "escaped to the protection of the Báilán Mountains. Ashamed and angry, he developed an illness," (*Zīzhìtōngjiàn*, ch. 118) and died. Before his death he established his younger brother, Āchái, as the ninth ruler of the Tǔyùhún.

With the strategic use of forces, Āchái invaded and incorporated neighboring lands, so that his territory extended for several thousands of *lǐ*, gradually becoming a powerful empire (see, *Zīzhìtōngjiàn* ch. 118, *Records of the Jin*, 40; thirteenth year of the Yìxī Reign of the Ān Emperor, 417).

The fourth record of protecting Báilán occurs in 444 when the Northern Wèi, taking advantage of internal turmoil within the Tǔyùhún, dispatched Fú Luó, the King of Jin, to lead a large army on a punitive expedition against the Tǔyùhún. The Tǔyùhún army was badly defeated, and "Mùlián (the Tǔyùhún ruler) fled to Báilán." The following year, the Northern Wèi dispatched the West Route Army to attack Báilán and surrounding areas, and Mùlián did not oppose him. Instead, Mùlián led his main forces west across the Qaidam deserts and invaded Yútán in Xīnjiāng Province, where he "killed their king and occupied their land." In 446, the Northern Wèi retreated and Mùlián returned to occupy Báilán and the surrounding areas.

The fifth record of protecting Báilán occurs in 460 when the Northern Wèi attacked the Tǔyùhún along two fronts. At this time, Shíyín, the twelfth ruler of the Tǔyùhún, was in the middle of constructing his capital at Báilán, and the histories do not record such language as, "fled to the protection of Báilán." Instead, they record that "Shíyín presently protected Báilán."

Except for Mùlián's inability to defend it, in each of

these cases, the Tǔyùhún were able to safeguard Báilán. Even in the exceptional case, Mùliyán invaded and occupied Yútíán by setting out from Báilán. Without the cushion of Báilán, he probably would have been unable to defeat Yútíán.

The Sixteen States of the Five 'Non- Hàn' Tribes (if the Tǔyùhún are added it should be the Seventeen States) were all 'flashes in the pan', rising and falling in quick succession. The Xiānbēi State of the Southern Yān lasted the shortest time, a mere thirteen years (398-410). The Xiānbēi State of the Southern Liáng lasted eighteen years (397-414). The large and powerful Former Qín (of the Dī people) survived for forty-four years (351-395), while the Western Qín (Xiānbēi) lasted forty-seven years (385-481). The sixteen states existed for a mere 136 years in total. Only the Tǔyùhún survived for 356 years, from 317 to 663, ending only when defeated by the Tǔbō. How could the Tǔyùhún last for such an extended period? There are certainly several reasons to explain this, but the most important one is that the Tǔyùhún occupied an advantageous position in Báilán.

At the time of the Sixteen States (fourth to sixth centuries) each state fought the others, attacking and swallowing each other, leaving few days of peace. The theater of 'being a king in the morning and a prisoner at night' lasted a long time, and cases of a single battle wiping out a country were commonplace. Truly, "In such commotion does the world's theater rage, as each one leaves another takes the stage."⁷

Let us consider as an example the Southern Liáng who occupied eastern Qīnghǎi. In the time of the first king, Tūfā Wūgū (?-399), such policies as favoring agriculture, fostering peaceful relations with neighboring countries, valuing people of talent, instituting light taxes, and so on,

⁷ {The quote is from the first chapter of *The Story of the Stone*, or *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (see Cao and Hawkes (1978).}

were adopted and the country flourished. Among the Sixteen States, the Southern Liáng was considered a civilized state. However, during the reign of the third generation ruler, Tūfā Nùtán (365-415), the army was exhausted from constant war, and the country knew no peace. Just as the Southern Liáng army was about to seize livestock of the Yǐfúwúdí State west of Rìyuè Pass, the Western Qín attacked their capital city in today's Lèdū County and the important town of Xīníng and the Southern Liáng, who had existed for a mere eighteen years, were extinguished. The process of extinction for the other fifteen states was much the same as that of the Southern Liáng.

However, this was not the case for the Tǔyùhún. In comparison with other contemporary states, particularly in the Tǔyùhún's early years, their composite strength was much less than that of their neighbors. And, in comparison with their later rival, the Northern Wèi, the Tǔyùhún were in another league. At one point or another, the Tǔyùhún fought wars with the Southern Liáng, Western Qín, Xià, and the Northern Wèi; they fought dozens of wars, large and small, and many times suffered large defeats. If they were defeated, the court and core military units would then, "flee to the protection of Báilán." In Báilán they rested and recuperated, built up their military strength, refined their training, and waited for an opportunity to set out again. Because the Tǔyùhún withdrew so far away after defeat, there was nothing their enemies could do about it; they simply accepted it. In the course of retreating to the safety of Báilán many times, the Tǔyùhún learned numerous lessons, developed, and grew stronger, in clear contrast with the fate of Tūfā Rútán of the Southern Liáng, who was so unceremoniously deposed.

The Tǔyùhún's defense of Báilán was therefore, the defense of their national fate. If there had been no Báilán to retreat to and defend, the Tǔyùhún would have been destroyed by the Western Qín or the Northern Wèi early on,

and their fate would have been the same as that of the other Sixteen States. In the early period, Báilán was the Tǔyùhún's reliable base, sturdy rearguard, and center for recuperating. In the middle and latter periods, it became the political and economic center of the Tǔyùhún kingdom. Owing to the special status of this location from the time of Yèyán, the Tǔyùhún were able to fully absorb the advanced culture of the Central Plains (China) and enact their policy of uniting the Qiāng tribes and ruling them jointly.

Owing to its special geographic position, the Tǔyùhún in Báilán had resources to develop political and economic relationships with the states to the north and south. Furthermore, because Báilán bordered on the Héxī Corridor (in western Gānsù) and the various states to the west, the Tǔyùhún had access to resources to open the southern Silk Route, making the Tǔyùhún the transit point of cultural flow between East and West from the period of the Northern and Southern dynasties up to the Táng Dynasty (fourth to eighth centuries). Because the Tǔyùhún had Báilán, their nation survived a long time, finally resulting in a combination of Tǔyùhún, Hàn, Qiāng, and Tǔfān cultures, creating a unique Tǔyùhún culture. In this light, Báilán is the starting point of a pluralistic multiculturalism. A single location with cultural significance of this depth is rare in ancient China's history.

OUR VIEW ON SEVERAL OPINIONS ON THE GEOGRAPHIC POSITION OF BÁILÁN

Where is the geographic locale of Báilán? A preliminary classification of opinions results in the following six positions:

- Lǐ Wénshí (2001) believes Báilán is somewhere in the six counties of Guōluò Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qīnghǎi Province, and that the 'Báilán Mountains' are the

Bāyánkālā⁸ Mountains (on the border of the Tibet Autonomous Region and Qīnghǎi, and Sìchuān provinces). Zhāng Dézǔ and Wáng Ruìqín (1995) concur.

- Cóng Zhé (1982) and Huáng and Zhōu (1983) believe Báilán is in the area around Dūlán and Bāilóng in the Qaidam Basin southwest of Qīnghǎi Lake.
- Based on linguistic analysis, Cáirénbāli (1999) believes 'Báilán' should be 'Bālán', therefore, Báilán is the 'Bāyánkālā Mountains'.
- Lǚ Jiànfú (1997) believes the modern Monguor pronunciation (*bulag*) for 'fountain, spring' corresponds to the Chinese transcription 'Báilán', and thus the meaning of 'Báilán' is 'spring' or 'place of springs'. This is taken as evidence that Báilán is in the source region of the Yellow River, which is

the entire area of Mǎduō County, in the northwest of Guōluò Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and the northeast part of Qǔmálái in Yùshù Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

- Liú Bǐngdé (1992) believes Báilán is in modern Gòngghé, Xīnghǎi, and Tóngdé counties, Hǎinán Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.
- Japanese scholar Yamaguchi Mizuo believes it is in Ābà Tibetan and Qiāng Autonomous Prefecture, Sìchuān Province. Matsuda Hisao believes it is in Qaidam.⁹

⁸ {Mongolian Bayan Khalag: *bayan* = rich, prosperous; *khalag* = gate.}

⁹ {The authors did not give a citation for these two scholars' arguments.}

When considering Báilán and examining historical materials related to the Tǔyùhún, we must remember three basic elements that would allow the repeatedly defeated Tǔyùhún to protect their basic livelihood and return to life. These three elements are:

First, the geographic position should have been remote and strategic, easily defended, and difficult to attack. In the words of the second generation ruler of the Tǔyùhún, Tǔyán, Báilán's, "location is remote and strategic; moreover, the locals are weak and easily controlled," pointing out that Báilán was both remote and strategic, and those who attacked it would not easily succeed. Also, the Báilán Qiāng residing at Báilán were easily controlled, or they could be thought of as willing to coexist amicably with the Tǔyùhún. Second, a large amount of living space with abundant resources would have been required to provide a subsistence base and ample land to maneuver. Third, a favorable geopolitical environment without strong neighbors would have been necessary.

These three elements were all essential; only when all were present could a location be considered the rearguard base of the Tǔyùhún. After sifting through the evidence we believe the modern Qaidam Basin and the northern and southern foothills of the Bù'érhànbùdá Mountains have these three elements and therefore, are the location of Báilán.

1. *Wèi shū*: Tǔyùhún chapter (ch. eighty-nine):

吐谷浑遂徙上陇，止于枹罕暨甘松，南界昂城、龙涸，从洮水西南极白兰数千里中，遂水草，庐帐而居：Tǔyùhún lead followers up the Lóng, stopping at Fūhàn and Gānsōng; the southern border was Āng City and Lónghé; for several thousand *lǐ* from the Táo River to the southwest extreme of the Báilán Mountains they followed the water and grass, residing in tents.

And, from the *Suí shū*: Tǔyùhún chapter (biographies #48):

吐谷浑与若洛魔不协，遂西度陇，止于甘松之南，洮水之西，南极白兰山，数千里之地：The Tǔyùhún did not get along with Ruólómó, and traveling west across the Lóng, they stopped in an area several thousand *lǐ* south of Gānsōng, west of the Táo River and south to the Báilán Mountains.

Both of these quotes refer to the time of the establishment of the Tǔyùhún kingdom and its center of activity in the border region between Qīnghǎi, Sìchuān, and Gānsù. The former quote refers to 'Báilán' and the latter quote refers to 'Báilán Mountains'; the position of both is southwest of the Táo River. The line, "*Cóng táo shuǐ xīnán jí báilán shān* 从洮水西南极白兰山" seems incongruous. We believe that Cóng Zhé (1982) correctly breaks up the line as, "*Cóng táo shuǐ xīnán, jí báilán shān* 从洮水西南, 极白兰山," meaning "southwest from the Tao River, reaching up to the Báilán Mountains." Thus, if the Báilán region is in the Qaidam Basin, it is exactly southwest of the Táo River, and the Báilán Mountains are precisely southeast of the Qaidam Basin. *Jí* 极 means 'stopping' or 'arriving', and here refers to the fact that the southern border of the Tǔyùhún territory reached the Báilán Mountains.

2. *Běi shǐ*, chapter 96 'Tǔyùhún':

白兰西南二千五百里，隔大岭，又度四十里海，有女王国。 2,500 *lǐ* southwest of Báilán, separated by a great mountain range and across a 40 *lǐ* sea there is a country with a woman king.

The 'country with a woman king' is the same as the 'Sūpí Country' referred to in the *Xīn táng shū*: Western Regions. It is in the present Tibet Autonomous Region. About 2,000 *lǐ* northeast from its political center is precisely at the southwest edge of the Qaidam Basin, and the mountain that separates them is the contemporary Tánggǔlā Mountain. This 'Báilán' is the Báilán region, not the Báilán Mountains.

3. In 445 AD, (the sixth year of Tàipíng Zhēn Jūn of the Northern Wèi) because of mutual suspicions among the family of the eleventh Tǔyùhún king, Mùlián, there was a civil war, and under the impending pressure of the Northern Wèi army, Báilán was unprotected. Mùlián led most of his forces west, invading Yútíán, "killing their king and occupying their land." Mùlián's power extended deep into the southern part of modern Xīnjiāng. How could Mùlián so easily take southern Xīnjiāng? The Tǔyùhún already occupied the entire Báilán area (in Qaidam) which bordered Qiěmò, thus he was familiar with the situation in Yútíán. Meanwhile, Mùlián knew that if he fought the Wèi army he would surely lose, and retreated with the entire army, thus preserving his strongest fighting force. Moreover, the Tǔyùhún and Yútíán had a long-standing trade relationship; consequently, Tǔyùhún traders probably supplied information and assisted in the invasion, which made it easy for Mùlián to take their cities and hold their land.

If Báilán had been in Guǒluò, Yùshù, or Sìchūān, Mùlián would have needed a huge army and would have had to cross the Bāyánkālā Mountains, the Kūnlún Mountains, the Dāngjīn Mountains, and great deserts before reaching Yútíán. The Mùlián of that time was at the end of his tether; in undertaking such an expedition it would have been hard for him to succeed.

4. In 460, the first year of Hépíng of the Northern Wèi, because Shíyín, the twentieth king,

两 受宋魏爵命，居止出入拟于王者，魏人忿之。定阳侯曹安表言：拾寅今保白兰，若分军左右，拾寅必走保南山，不过十日，人畜乏食，可一举而定。had received feudal titles from Sòng and Wèi, and his behavior was against the king's wishes, the Wèi people became angry with him. Cáo Ān, the Marquis of Dìngyáng, announced, 'Shíyín at present protects Báilán. If we divide our army to the right and left, Shíyín will be forced to retreat to the Nán (South) Mountains. In no more than ten days, with both people and livestock deprived of food, they can be captured in one stroke.'

The Nán Mountains referred to in this quote are the Báilán Mountains (the Bù'èrgànbùdá Mountains). In this instance, the Wèi army divided along two routes. The southern route traveled from Xīníng to Gònghé and Xìngzhǎi before entering Tǔyùhún territory. The northern route set out from Liángzhōu and crossed the Qīlián Mountains into Qaidam. Shíyín entered the Báilán Mountains. The Wèi army ran into a 'contagion', probably succumbing to altitude sickness, and was not able to attain their goal of "capturing them in one stroke." This episode shows that if Báilán were in Guōluò, Yùshù, or Ābà, the northern army would have had to cross the Qīlián Mountains, a vast desert, and then cross the Kūnlún Mountains before reaching the battlefield. Sūn Zǐ's *Art of War* (*Sūnzǐ bīngfǎ*) says: "If one chases the enemy for fifty *lǐ* to seek advantage, the general will certainly be toppled." It seems the Wèi army would not attempt something as inept as this.

5. One of the four great Tǔyùhún garrisons was at Qūzhēnchuān, which contemporary scholars agree was located in modern Chákǎ. The *Sòng shū*: *xiānbēi tǔyùhún*

zhuàn (ch. ninety-six) records: "Quzhenchuan has a salt lake; north of the Gāngǔ range there is a 'rodent bird' hole." The salt lake referred to in this passage is Chákǎ Salt Lake. One of the present authors worked in Hǎixī for thirty years, and on more than ten occasions stayed overnight at Chákǎ Lake. In the winter of 1960, on the grass behind the original Chákǎ Hostel, he personally saw the 'rodent bird' hole. One bird, larger than a sparrow, with yellow and white markings, stood upon the head of a rodent with wings spread apart. The rodent was startled and the bird called out, and together they entered a hole.¹⁰ Chákǎ is part of Báilán, and borders Xiānggridé and the stream Cháhànwūsū.¹¹

After the Tǔfān defeated the Tǔyùhún, they set up a Tǔyùhún prince to unify the former Tǔyùhún lands. They gave him the name 'King of Mòhè'. Mòhè was an ancient toponym in Qaidam, west of modern Chákǎ, contiguous with Cháhànwūsū. After the 1950s, it was the pasture land of the Mòhè camel ranch.

6. The younger brother of Imperial Preceptor Phags-pa, Qià'ná Duōjiē, was enfeoffed as the 'King of Báilán' (1239-1267). He led a celebrated life, once serving as an attendant to Sakya Pandita. Upon receiving an invitation from Khotan (Kuòduān; d. 1251), he went to Liángzhōu to discuss the surrender of the Tǔfān to the Yuán. Among his descendants was Suǒnánzàngbǔ, who was enfeoffed as King of Báilán (see, *Yuán shǐ, yīng zōng jì*). The *Dūlán County Gazetteer* (*Dūlán xiàn zhì*) records: "In the first

¹⁰ {The pika (*Ochotona curzoniae*), found at high altitudes and native to Qīnghǎi Province, is the 'rodent' referred to here.} The ancients erroneously believed that female birds and male rodents could mate; this is simply a case of mutual protection.

¹¹ {Mongolian: Chagan Usu; *chagan* = white; *usu* = water.}

year of Zhìyuè of the Yuán Dynasty (1321), the Yuán court enfeoffed Suǒnánzàngbǔ as the King of Báilán, granting him a gold seal." Three others were also enfeoffed after him by the Yuán as King of Báilán, namely Gǔngá, Lièbā, and Jiànzàn. The Báilán fiefdom was in modern Hǎixī Prefecture. The reasoning behind this political move was that Hǎixī bordered Tibet, and its people were Tǔyùhún and Tǔfān. Administration of Tibet necessitated administration of Hǎixī. The same principle applies in modern and ancient times. The Yuán court's enfeoffment of the King of Báilán respected the historical legacy and resident population. It was an inspired decision of great political foresight. The Báilán palace was probably in the modern Xiānggrìdé area, owing to it being a strategic point of transit in and out of Tibet.

7. A comparison of the natural environment of Báilán and Qaidam: The various historical records from the period of the Northern and Southern dynasties to the Táng Dynasty (fourth to eighth centuries) record that Báilán "produces gold and metal" and "dispatches emissaries to present 'rhinoceros' and iron armor." The Qaidam Basin is full of minerals and abounds in every kind of mined resource; the Tǔyùhún had a well-developed metal smelting technology. At present, an iron mine that produces thirty tons annually has been built in Cháhànwūsū; the gold mines of Bālóng and Gé'ěrmù produce on a large scale; once, a seven kilogram piece of gold was produced near Délíngā.

The 'rhinoceros armor' is an extravagant name for the armor made of wild bovine skins. The wild bovine of the Kūnlún Range is one of the largest on the Qīnghǎi-Tibet Plateau. "Báilán produces 'Sìchuān horses' and yaks." 'Sìchuān horses' are the Qaidam horses and Qīnghǎi steeds produced in the area surrounding Qīnghǎi Lake. They are also known as products of the Tǔyùhún

ancestors. Because they were often ridden to Sìchuān, Gānsòng, and such places where they were sold to people from central China, they became known as 'Sìchuān horses'. Yaks are one of the local specialties of the Hǎixī region. "Báilán is suitable for barley and many vegetables." The modern Hǎixī area is one of Qīnghǎi's more important bases for commercial grain production. The record for spring wheat production is from Xiāngrìdé. In contrast, there is one small area on the banks of the Chúmǎkē River in Guōluò that can produce wheat, but other than that, the entire region is unsuitable for wheat cultivation.

As for Báilán, in the northwest is a several hundred *lǐ* stretch of flowing sand; in the summer, there is a hot wind, which is the bane of travelers. Only the camel is able to predict the arrival of these terrible winds. With a whistle, they gather together and protect their heads beneath the sand; those left unprotected face the prospect of death.

This is a typical scene in western Qaidam. Guōluò and Yùshù lack areas of several hundred *lǐ* of flowing sand. Camels are common in Hǎixī, and specialize in eating such plants as *Peganum harmala*, crested wheat grass (*Agropyron cristatum*), and sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) and are fond of salt licks. Guōluò and Yùshù lack the conditions for raising camels, and consequently do not produce them.

8. The regional political environment in Báilán and the Qaidam Basin: The Qaidam Basin constitutes a complete inner-continental basin with an area of 220,000 square kilometers. The Kūnlún Mountains to the south and Qīlián Mountains to the north form natural screens. That the Tǔyùhún selected this land as their rearguard is an expression of their great wisdom.

The center of Báilán is the Xiāngrìdé-

Cháhànwūsū-Bālóng area. These three places are strung along a single river, and snuggled along a branch of the Kunlun Mountains, known as the Bù'ěrgānbùdá Mountains. This range cuts across the landscape from west to east for more than 180 kilometers. Its highest peak, Cuòmùcèfēng, is 5,486 meters high and the average altitude is around 5,000 meters. The mountain range is steeper to the south, with a more gradual slope to the north. There has been a road connecting Xīnghǎi and Guǒluò to the Bù'ěrgānbùdá Mountains since ancient times but, in many places, there are strategic passes that a single individual could defend. Streams flow in every direction within the area. There are more than ten major rivers, including the Xiùgōu and Qaidam rivers, all of which have their headwaters in the springs of Bù'ěrgānbùdá. The riversides are steep cliffs, and the rivers run swiftly. Without an experienced guide, a large contingent of people and horses could only cross them with great difficulty. Tuōsù and Ālā lakes to the north of the mountains constitute a natural defensive structure. The numerous natural springs and abundant pastures are sufficient to provide many people and horses ample defenses for a long time. At present, this is the summer pasture of the various townships in Dūlán County. Because of this natural environment, the contemporary Tǔyùhún people could retreat to the south mountains (the Báilán Mountains) and defend themselves if they met a strong opponent. Opponents such as the Western Qín and the Northern Wèi could not defeat them there. Just the thin atmosphere of the 4,000 meter high environment caused their enemies to weaken, hampering their ability for a protracted engagement.

From the perspective of the regional political environment during the Northern and Southern dynasties (fourth to sixth centuries AD), the Qaidam Basin and Qīnghǎi Lake and north of the Qīlián Mountains, there

was only the Northern Liáng, Gāochàng,¹² and several small states in the western region; in the far west there was the Qiěmò,¹³ the several states of Yútían;¹⁴ in the south and southwest were such various small states as the Dǎngxiàng,¹⁵ Duōmí,¹⁶ and the Sūnbō.¹⁷ These were all small states that posed no threat to the Tǔyùhún. Further south was the Náncháo, a state friendly to the Tǔyùhún. The Xīfān had not yet come to power. Only in the east were there strong enemies; the Western Qín and the Northern Wèi. This is precisely one reason the Tǔyùhún could make the Qaidam Basin their rearguard. This kind of favorable political and geographic environment was only enjoyed by the Tǔyùhún from the time of the Five Foreign States and Sixteen States up to the Táng Dynasty (fourth to seventh centuries). This is also the critical reason that the Tǔyùhún successfully retreated to and protected their rearguard Báilán five times. Even more, it was an excellent choice by the Tǔyùhún founder, Shíyín,

¹² {Gāochàng was a city-state located southwest of modern Turfan, Xīnjiāng Uyghur Autonomous Region. During this time period, it was a major transportation hub along the north rim of the Tarim Basin.}

¹³ {Qiěmò was a city-state located in the southeast of the Tarim Basin.}

¹⁴ {This refers to polities along the south of the Tarim Basin.}

¹⁵ {As used here, Dǎngxiàng refers to a state established by the Dǎngxiàng Qiāng peoples in the Sichuān-Gānsù-Qīnghǎi border region.}

¹⁶ {Little is known about Duōmí, a small state centered in what is now Yùshù Autonomous Prefecture, Qīnghǎi Province.}

¹⁷ {Sūnbō, about which little is known, refers to a small state located in what is now the northern part of the Tibet Autonomous Region.}

to operate in Fúluòchuān (in the Qaidam Basin).

9. The geographical position of Báilán from the perspective of the Tǔyùhún's establishment of the Southern Silk Road: Zhōu Wēizhōu, a scholar of the Tǔyùhún, thinks that the Southern Silk Road was centered in Báilán. In his major study, *History of the Tǔyùhún* (*Tǔyùhún shǐ*; Zhōu, 1985), he writes:

There were three passable routes on the Southern Silk Road: first, from Fúsi City passing through Báilán (the Dúlán-Bāilóng area), then northwest up to the modern Lesser and Greater Qaidam, up to Dūnhuáng, and from Dūnhuáng west through Yángguān into the western regions of Xīnjiāng; second, from Fúsi City through Báilán and west to modern Gé'ěrmù, then northwest through Kǎsīkǒu, across the Ā'érjīn Mountains in the Shànshàn of the western regions, and then following along the same as the first route (this route is basically the same as the Qīnghǎi-Xīnjiāng Highway, a major thoroughfare on the old Qīnghǎi road); third, Fúsi City-Báilán-Gé'ěrmù-Bùlúntái-Chúlākè'àlāgān River Valley-Xīnjiāng.

If Báilán were in Yùshù, Ābà, or Guǒluò, then the Southern Silk Road would need re-surveying.

10. In 1958, with the support and encouragement of Guō Mòruò,¹⁸ an assemblage of national specialists on history, geography, and archaeology published the *Historical Atlas of China* (*Zhōngguó shǐgǎo dìtújī*) after more than ten years of research and editing (Guō, 1979). On the *Northern Wèi-Southern Qí Period* (*Běi bèi-nán qí shíqī xíngshì*) map, Báilán is unmistakably located in the

¹⁸ {1892-1978, a historian, prolific author, archaeologist, university president, and government official from Sìchuān.}

southeast of Qaidam, and Hǎixī and the area surrounding Qīnghǎi Lake is marked as the Tǔyùhún area. The authoritativeness of this atlas should be respected. Also, the national atlas issued by the Southern Sòng court labels the Qaidam basin as 'Āchái' Province. 'Āchái' is the name other ethnic groups gave the Tǔyùhún in the period from the Northern and Southern States to the Táng Dynasty. These two maps provide mutually re-enforcing evidence.

11. We would like to present a slightly speculative opinion regarding the name 'Báilán Mountains'. The term 'Báilán Mountains' appeared in Chinese historical documents. 'Bù'ěrgānbùdá' in Mongolian means 'Buddha's Mountains'.¹⁹ In the time that Ögedei Khan (Wōkuòtái) was on the throne at the beginning of the Yuán Dynasty (1229-1241), his second son Khotan (Kuòduān) was responsible for administering all of Tibet, including Qīnghǎi. The Qaidam area was the pasturage of the Sālì Wèiwù'ér.²⁰ The eighth son of the Yuán founder, Kublai Khan, Kōkōcū (Kuòkuòchū), was enfeoffed as King Níng and dispatched to his post in the Qīnghǎi-Tibet region. At the end of the Yuán Dynasty, the noble, Buyan Temür (Bǔyān Tiēmù'ěr), was enfeoffed as King Níng and dispatched to his post in the Qaidam area. Because the Yuán Dynasty founder, Kublai Khan, designated 'Phags pa of the Sakya Sect of Tibetan Buddhism his National Preceptor and Imperial Preceptor, therefore, in the time of the former and later King Níng, they must

¹⁹ {In fact, the Mongolian name, Burkhan Bogda, can be parsed as Burkhan = Buddha, lord; Bogda = Buddha, suggesting 'Lord Buddha' as the more accurate translation.}

²⁰ {The Sālì Wèiwù'ér are generally thought to be one of the peoples of medieval Western China that are now classified as the Yùgù, specifically the western branch of that group.}

have revered and honored the Buddha and therefore named the Báilán Mountains 'Buddha's Mountains', because they were located in the Báilán area facing south toward the location of the historical Buddha (India); that is, it is natural that they are called the Bù'ěrgānbùdá Mountains in Mongolian. We surmise that the name 'Bù'ěrgānbùdá' first appeared around the thirteenth century, about 800-900 years after the name 'Báilán Mountains'. The nomads of Dūlán County in the Bālong region still refer to the Bù'ěrgānbùdá Mountains as the Bālong Mountains or the Bālong South Mountains. Both 'Bālong' and 'Báilán' share an initial *b-*, and their finals are close to rhyming (*-long*, *-lan*), thus the difference between the two might simply be a small sound change.

Báilán, Báilán Mountains, and Báilán Qiāng are three closely related human-geographic concepts that should not be muddled together. Báilán is the large area centered on the Tǔyùhún *yázhàng* (capital city), which is in modern Xiānggridé Township, Dūlán County, Hǎixī Prefecture.

'Báilán Mountains' is the old name for the Bù'ěrgānbùdá Mountains. Báilán Qiāng is a branch of the Qiāng who lived on the northern and southern foothills of the Báilán Mountains under Tǔyùhún control. The two ethnic groups lived together.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE TǔYÙHÚN'S BÁILÁN CAPITAL CITY AND FÚLUÒCHUĀN

Documentary Evidence

In 452, "Shíyín first built a city in Fúluòchuān." A note to chapter 126 of the *Zīzhìtōngjiàn* reads: "Residing in Fúluòchuān, they still would not dare distance themselves from the protection of the Báilán (mountains)." The *Liáng*

shū zhǔyì zhuàn (ch. 54) reads: "Shíyín was established and employed documents and seals (in his rule), erecting city walls and waterworks, he built palaces and houses, and his princes also set up residences." This clearly explains that Shíyín constructed a new capital city at the base of the Báilán Mountains. The *Sòng shū*: Tǔyùhún chapter records that the Tǔyùhún, "on the whole controlled Mùhèchuān." The *Zhōnghuá shūjù* edition annotates this passage as follows: "Mùhè, Mòhè, and Fúluò are three different names for the same place; the difference is due to variation in phonetic transcription." If this is true, then Qaidam Basin contained two important Tǔyùhún garrisons: Qūzhēnchuān (modern Chákǎ) and Fúluòchuān (the location of the capital city), which is also known as Mòhèchuān. This capital city is located in the ancient ruins in modern Xiānggrídé Township. In the first year of Shéngūī of the Northern Wèi (518), Sòng Yún and the monk Huìshēng traveled to the western regions to collect Buddhist texts. *The Record of Luòyáng and Gālán* (*Luòyáng Gālán jì*) records the following incident:

Within Wényì District there was the residence of a Dūnhuáng native named Sòng Yún. Yún and Huìshēng were dispatched to the western regions. In the winter of the first year of Shéngūī (518) during the eleventh month, the empress dispatched the monk, Huìshēng of Chóngli Temple, to go to the western regions to acquire scriptures, and they obtained 170 texts, all of which were marvelous Mahayana sutras. Setting out from the capital and traveling west for forty days they reached Chǐlǐng (Barren Range), which was the border with the western regions where the imperial border guards were located. No grass or trees grow in Chǐlǐng, hence its name. In its mountains, there are birds and rodents living in the same holes. Though seemingly different, they are the same type; the male bird and female rodent, represent the feminine and masculine principles, and therefore it is referred to as 'Bird-Rodent-

Share-a-Hole'. Setting out from Chǐlǐng and traveling for twenty-three days they crossed flowing sands and arrived at the Tǔyùhún [capital]. The road was extremely cold, with much wind and snow; flying sand and pebbles made it difficult to see. Only the region around Tǔyùhún was warmer than other places. Their country has a written language, which is basically like that of the Wèi, but their customs and politics mostly follow the barbarian mode. Setting out from the Tǔyùhún, they traveled west 3,500 *lǐ* and reached Shànshàn City. This city had set up its own king who was conquered by the Tǔyùhún. At present, 3,000 troops of General Níngxī, second son of the Tǔyùhún ruler [Fúliánchóu], are garrisoned in the city to guard against the western enemies.

There are many interpretations of the Tǔyùhún capital mentioned in this passage. Some say it is in the bend in the Yellow River in Hǎinán Prefecture (Hǎinán Héqǔ);²¹ others say it is modern Fúsì City west of Qīnghǎi Lake; and others say it is modern Délíngā. From Rìyuè Mountain to Hǎinán Héqǔ or Fúsì City does not require twenty-three days of travel. These two places are certainly not warmer than other places, and they lack flowing sands to be crossed. Moreover, Fúsì City was when Kuālǔ was the Tǔyùhún khan (535-591), and was the capital during the Tǔyùhún mid-period, while Mòhèchuān (Fúluòchuān) capital, at the latest, was constructed during the time of Shíyín (452-481). The end of the Shíyín reign, 481, is fifty-four years earlier than the earliest period of the reign of Kuālǔ (535). The time that Sòng Yún and Huìshēng reached the Tǔyùhún capital was the end of the first year of Shénguī, or the beginning of the following year; that is, in late 518 or early 519, which is the end of the twenty-ninth year or the beginning of the thirtieth

²¹ {This refers to an area in the southeast of modern Gòngghé County, Hǎinán Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.}

year of Shíyín's descendant, Khan Fúliánchóu's, reign, sixty-six years after Shíyín built the city, and twenty-two years before Shíyín's great-grandson, Kuālǚ, built his city. Therefore, the capital Shíyín built could not be Fúsì City. As for Délǐnghā, there are no deserts to cross, and it is not warmer than other places. Moreover, one would have to travel to the northwest, thus the direction is incorrect.

Another account in the historical record related to Fúluòchuān is that in 444, because Emperor Jin of the Wèi, had ordered General Fúluò to recruit Mùlián to attack Báilán, he wanted to reward Fúluò's achievement. Therefore, the Northern Wèi began referring to the area of the Tǔyùhún Báilán capital, centered in Xiāngrìdé, as Fúluòchuān. Two years later, Mùlián returned with men and horses from Yútíán and probably cleared the area for the Báilán capital city, setting up a foundation for Shíyín to later construct the capital in modern Xiāngrìdé.

As to Xiāngrìdé capital city being warmer than the other areas Sòng Yún and Huishēng traversed, we propose a new solution. They originally set out from the Northern Wèi capital at Luòyáng in winter in the eleventh lunar month. After a forty day trek they reached Chílǐng (modern Rìyuè Mountain in Rìyuè Township, Huángyuán County, Qīnghǎi Province, about ninety kilometers west of Xīníng). The time was mid-winter, with temperatures probably minus twenty to minus thirty degrees Celsius. At an altitude of more than 3,000 meters above sea level, one can imagine the difficulties of their travel. Each day they could probably travel around thirty *huálǐ*.²² The distance from Rìyuè

²² {A *huálǐ* is a modern term for the traditional *lǐ*, a measure of distance, to distinguish it from the *gōnglǐ*, 'kilometer'. Since both the modern 'kilometer' and the traditional measure of distance can be referred to as *lǐ* in Modern Standard Chinese, the authors use the term *huálǐ* to avoid ambiguity.

Mountain to Cháhànwūsū Town, Dūlán County, Hǎixī Prefecture, Qīnghǎi Province is about 740 *huálǐ*. Consequently, they could reach Cházhèn after traveling twenty-one to twenty-two days. Again, traveling to the northwest along an ancient road and then descending south from the contemporary Zōngjiā Township, they would cross the Tiěkuí flowing sands, and reach the old Tǔyùhún capital, modern Xiānggrídé Town. The flowing sand (desert) abuts Hēdōng Village, Xiānggrídé Township, about a day's travel from the city, thus the twenty-three day journey was entirely possible, and the time recorded is credible.

From the perspective of the seasons, when they reached the Tǔyùhún capital in Xiānggrídé, Spring had begun, between the second (*yǔshuǐ* 'rain water') and third (*jīngzhé* 'insects awaken') solar periods. Moreover, the geographic position of the ancient capital is in the southeast part of Qaidam Basin. The climate here is relatively warm. Xiānggrídé is a Tibetan word meaning 'the place with dense forests'. Before the 1950s, the mountains were clearly visible and the rivers ran clear. Such grass as the needle-leaf sage (*Carex duriuscula*), Chinese cinquefoil (*Potentilla chinensis*), and Syrian rue (*Peganum harmala*) grow like a carpet, and there are forests full of such trees as the China savin (*Sabina chinensis*), *lěngshān* (*Akjes fabric*), Qingyang populus (*Populus cathayana*), Chinese tamarisk twig (*Cacumen tamaricis*), branchy tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), little-spike willow (*Salix microstachya*), and sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*). We can see that the saying, "warmer than other places" is as true today as it was then.

At the beginning of the Táng Dynasty, Dào Xuǎn (596-667) wrote *The Local Gazetteer of Shìjiā* (*Shìjiā fāng zhì*). The fourth chapter of this work describes the journey from Shànchéng (Xīníng) to the west:

The exact length of a *huálǐ* is disputed and is thus not translated.}

southwest about 100 *lǐ* we arrived at Chéngfèng Garrison, which was the site of a Suí era exchange market. After a further 200 *lǐ* west we arrived at Qīnghǎi Lake, which has a small mountain in the middle (Hǎixīn Mountain); the lake is more than 700 *lǐ* in circumference. Southwest of the lake we arrived at the Tǔyùhún capital (that is, the capital, Xiānggrídé), and again to the southwest we went to the national border with the Báilán Qiāng.

This place is the northern and southern foothills of the Bù'érǎnbùdá Mountains which at that time were inhabited by the Báilán Qiāng. The Tǔyùhún capital mentioned in the document is not Fúsì City, because that city is northwest of the lake, not southwest of Qīnghǎi Lake. What Dào Xuǎn has written is reliable; he was on his way to India through Tibet. The path he took is basically the same route as what was later known as the 'Great Road to Tibet' which in modern times is the Qīnghǎi-Tibet Road. Traveling in olden days was difficult; thus they would not have gone 1,000 *lǐ* out of their way, have crossed the Kūnlún Mountains to enter Guōluò, and then gone on to Tibet.

Archeological Evidence

The discovery of the ancient tomb complex in Rèshuǐ, Dūlán County, provided powerful evidence that Báilán is in the Qaidam Basin and the Bù'érǎnbùdá Mountains are the Báilán Mountains. There are more than 2,000 burial sites in the Rèshuǐ ancient tomb complex, of which there are four central locations: Rèshuǐ, Gōulǐ, Bāilóng, and Xiàrihā. These constitute ninety percent of the tombs, distributed deep in the Bù'érǎnbùdá Mountains along the southeast side, arrayed in the shape of an open fan with the Tǔyùhún capital, Xiānggrídé, at its center. The sites are within ten to sixty kilometers from

the center. The other graves are distributed in such places as Délǐnghā, Wūlán, Gé'ěrmù, and Mángyá. The ancient tomb distribution is nearly identical to the Báilán area centered on Báilán City described in this essay. The tombs of the kings and nobles surround the Xiānggridé capital in accordance with the ancient practice dictating the burial of kings beside their capital cities.

The relics recovered from the ancient sites number in the tens of thousands, the great majority of which are from the ancient tomb complex of Rèshuǐ. The cultural significance of these relics is tremendous. The time period reflected in the relics spans the Northern and Southern dynasties to the Kāiyuán period (713-741) of the Táng Dynasty, which matches the time the Tǔyùhún were active in the Báilán area. In such areas as Guǒluò, Yùshù, and Hǎinán, no such tomb complex or relics have been unearthed.

Silks are the most typical relics, occurring in great numbers and wide variety, and demonstrating excellent craftsmanship. Certain textiles have writing on them. Eighty-six per cent of the silks originated in the Central Plains area of China, while fourteen per cent are from central and west Asia. There are also numerous gold and silver items, cornelian adornments, perfume bottles, and cosmetics cases. This evidence of the Tǔyùhún's activities along the Southern Silk Road, as well as evidence of the pivotal role played by Báilán on the Southern Silk Road, was first noted by Zhōu Wēizhōu, a scholar of Tǔyùhún history (Zhōu, 1985).

The Rèshuǐ tombs also produced an ancient bronze seal known as *jīnfēng*. The Tǔyùhún established official positions in accordance with Hàn rule (Zhōu, 1992), and this seal was the official seal for Chinese language communications among various Tǔyùhún officials. It is not an object of Tǔfān officialdom. The Tǔfān had Tibetan writing when they entered Qīnghǎi; their official equipment and decorations differed from those of the Hàn system.

Three gold coins from the Eastern Roman Empire

were unearthed in the Qaidam Region in the 1980s. One of the most precious among them is a gold coin of Theodosius II, unearthed in Mùcǎo Village, thirteen kilometers northeast of Xiāngrìdé Town. Theodosius II's reign was 408-450, corresponding to the reign of the Tǔyùhún kings Wūgēdī, Shùluògān, Ācháí, Mùguī, Mùlián, and Shíyín. This time period preceded the Tǔfān's entry into Qīnghǎi by more than a century, thus the owner of this coin could only have been a king, noble, or merchant centered in the Xiāngrìdé area from the time between Wūgēdī and Shíyín (the first half of the fifth century).

Much pottery has been found in the tombs. Archeologist Xǔ Xīnguó believes the pottery:

resembles [those of the] Chinese Jin tombs of the east, and similar pieces from the Chinese Jin tombs of the Héxī Corridor; their shared characteristics are obvious; clearly they are influenced by the Chinese areas.

The Tǔyùhún time period corresponds to that of the Western Jin, and geographically they neighbored the Héxī Corridor and it is to be expected that the utensils used in their lives were influenced by them (the Western Jin).

There is a group of carvings on the cliffs of Lùsī Valley in the middle of the Rèshuǐ ancient tomb complex, including three sitting Buddhas, three standing Buddhas, and a horse. These images of the Buddha were created to protect the tombs of the Rèshuǐ kings. According to experts, they were made during the period of the Northern dynasties, which corresponds to the fact that in Mùlián's time "in the country there was the way of the Buddha." That the Buddha and a horse were carved on the same wall demonstrates the respect the Tǔyùhún showed for horses. The *Jīn shū* (Tǔyùhún chapter) records: "Both murder and horse-thievery were capital offenses." The position of horses in the hearts of the Tǔyùhún people is clear, thus they were carved together

with the Buddha on the wall and worshiped.

The Rèshuǐ number one tomb was the grave of a king, and the Keshigtü (Kēshàngtú) sacrificial platform was the sacrificial altar for the king. The tomb gate and sacrificial altar face northeast. The tomb gates of the extant tombs also face northeast, towards the mountains, with their backs to the marsh, which is very different from the Hàn system. This is related to the Tūyùhún belief in and worship of the shamanistic Heavenly Spirit (Mongol: Tengri; Chinese: Tènggé'ěr) and Sun Spirit (Mongol: Naran; Chinese: nàrán), and it also symbolizes that they had not forgotten the culture of Liǎodōng, their original homeland. Furthermore, the number one tomb at Rèshuǐ has a tomb door, a tomb path, and ancillary rooms to the right and left sides, very much like the tombs of the Wèi and Jìn kings. In this way, the Tūyùhún, "built their tombs in the style of the Hàn," regarding themselves as "the Western Fān of China." Their ancestral line began as "the descendants of the Xióng family;" their ancestor Mò Hùbá, following Sīmǎ Yì, pacified Gōng Sūnyuán; earning merit for the empire, Mò Hùbá was enfeoffed as the Shuài Yì King.²³ Consequently, his descendants believed their kings were entitled to burials in the manner of the Hàn kings.

The sacrificial altar at Rèshuǐ has the remnants of eight sacrificed dogs and eighty-seven sacrificed horses. This is a continuation of the old practice of the Xiānbēi of the northeast. A mask was taken from the face of one corpse, and analysis has shown it to be an instrument of shamanic practice. The Xiānbēi also believed in shamanism.

Many coffin paintings were unearthed at Délǐnghā

²³ {This refers to a war in 238 AD between the Wèi and a warlord, Gōng Sūnyuán, who occupied the modern Liǎodōng area. The Wèi commander, Sīmǎ Yì, (179-251) who was victorious in this campaign, became famous for his military strategy.}

and Rèshuǐ, depicting such things as the king, hunts, picnics, trading, conferences, wakes, sacrifices, parties, crying, singing, discussing the past, and decorated arrows. These paintings reflect every aspect of Tǔyùhún social life. Their clothes, utensils, customs, and cultural characteristics are in accord with the historical record of Tǔyùhún social life. Also, two painted coffins were unearthed in Mùcǎo Village (the same location where the gold coins were unearthed). Ink and mineral pigments illustrate Tǔyùhún riding horses and shooting arrows, additional evidence that the Tǔyùhún of Báilán were centered in Xiāngrìdé.

Field Investigation and Testimony from Residents.

From 6-15 June 2007, five of us went to investigate the Dūlán area of Hǎixī Prefecture, Qīnghǎi Province. The Xiāngrìdé area has four remnants of the ancient city; of these, the remnants of the old Xiāngrìdé City are the largest. Within the city there is a city. There were still remnants of the old city's northern wall in the 1960s. The base of the wall was eighteen meters wide, and the remnant was three meters high. The east-west length was 320 meters, and the north-south length was 300 meters. The local Mongol nomads called it 'Délùbànjīn', meaning the four-sided city.²⁴ Surrounding the city was a ditch more than eight meters wide that could be filled with water to defend against attack. The eastern city wall had the main city gate to greet the rising sun, in accordance with the practice of sun worship. The interior city, which contained the king's rooms and palaces, was built against the north city wall. The city walls of this interior city were eighty meters long from east to west, and seventy meters long from north to south. The interior city also had a gate on the east side.

²⁴ {Classical Mongol = *dörbeljin* 'square'.}

North and south of the king's city are remnants of tall watchtowers. The north tower was built on Běishā Mountain at a strategic position on the Tibet road. About 1.8 kilometers from the north city wall, it stood 120 meters high,²⁵ allowing guards to look far into the northwest for approaching enemies. The south guard tower is situated about 300 meters from the south city wall atop a seventy to eighty meter tall hillock. The guard tower is a two-storied structure; the bottom story, the guards' residence, was about four square meters in area; the top story was the outlook and warning area of about three square meters in area from where guards watched for enemies approaching from the southeast. We ascended the hill to inspect the guards' residence and discovered that the tamped-earth construction was quite peculiar. Within the tamped earth layers there were poplar beams about ten centimeters in circumference, spaced about ten centimeters apart that served as a support framework, much like steel re-enforced concrete in modern construction. There are many ancient cities in Qīnghǎi, but an ancient city with city walls, a moat, and watchtowers is very rare, demonstrating the scope of the city's grandeur.

Later, Shíyín's great-grandson, Kuālǚ, built a city in imitation of this city eight kilometers northwest of Qīnghǎi Lake: Fúsi City. Its east-west wall was a bit longer, and its north-south wall was a bit shorter; there was a city within a city, an east-facing main gate, and there was a tamped-earth platform on the central axis of the city that also used poplar-beam reinforced, Tǔyùhún-style construction.

While in the field, we separately interviewed older people who had seen the old city walls. They are:

²⁵ {This is probably measured from the base of the 'mountain' to the top of the tower.}

- Mr. Kǒng Xiànwén (born 1934, native of Xīníng, peasant, high school graduate, resident of Déshèng Village, Xiāngrìdé Town, resident since the 1950s);
- Mr. Zhōu Tài (born 1923, native of Zhāmálóng Township, Huángzhōng County, Qīnghǎi Province, peasant, primary school graduate, resident of Xiàtán Village, Cháwūsū Township, Dūlán County, has lived in Dūlán since 1941 and came to Xiāngrìdé many times to visit his friend, Blacksmith Zhào); and
- Mr. Niú Zīwén (born 1921, native of Xīníng, calligrapher, served as chairmen of the iron and lumber collective of Xiāngrìdé Town in the mid-twentieth century).

A compendium of their comments is presented below:

1. The Xiāngrìdé old city was about 300 meters square, basically rectangular in shape, and is called “Délǔbànjīn” in Mongolian. There was a city within the city. Zhōu Tài first saw the city walls in the 1940s and said at that time they were still quite complete, with grass growing on top of them. On the east and southern sides there were large openings that were big enough for people, horses, and carts to pass through. There was an earthen platform (four observation towers) in each of the four corners. Along the north wall was an inner city, seventy to ninety square meters, which was called the city packed in the city (*chéng tào chéng* 城套城). On the north and south mountains there were fire towers (guard towers). Mr. Zhōu's friend, Zhào Bànglún, was a blacksmith whose house was near the base of the east wall. He had dug up, one after the other, nearly thirty utensils over time, including a large copper pot, bronze plate, iron wares, and pottery. He passed away seven or eight years ago, and it is unknown what happened to those items.

2. After the 1950s, with the increasing speed of agricultural collectivization, important relics were unearthed within the inner and outer city walls. Just the ones seen by one of these writers were a large copper shard with carved decorations, arrow heads, jade implements, and iron implements. It is a pity they have not been preserved. Residents of Hédōng Village, where the ancient city had been, such as Kǒng Xiànwén, personally experienced the bounty of unearthed relics. In the 1970s, there was a campaign to increase the amount of flat land; north of the old city there was a graveyard with 100-200 gravestones of various sizes. The coffins were all cavities carved out of complete cypress timbers, with the corpses lying face up inside. On top was a flat board. The corpses were mostly of military generals, with semi-circular helmets made of leather, and bronze pieces covering the eyes. The armor formed three layers: an inner layer of felt, a middle layer of leather, and an outer layer of bronze, all held together with bronze rivets. Numerous burial objects were found with the corpses, including a large amount of silk, some of which had Chinese characters, and deer and cloud decorations. There were arrow quivers made of layered birch bark and many sets of leather armor, which had been abandoned because they were "dead people's things." There are no birch trees within a 400 kilometer radius of Xiāngrǐdé. It is therefore possible that this birch bark quiver was brought by the Tǔyùhún from their homeland in the northeast.

In summary, we believe that the Báilán area is the Qaidam Basin and the Báilán Mountains are the Bù'ěrgānbùdá Mountains. The Báilán Qiāng were a branch of the Qiāng that resided below the Báilán Mountains and were under Tǔyùhún control for a long time. The old city of Xiāngrǐdé was the medieval Tǔyùhún political, economic,

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and military center; it was the capital of the Tǔyùhún in the time of Shíyín and the location of the ancient capital city of Báilán.

CHINESE WORD LIST

A

Ā'érjīn Mountains 阿尔金山

Ābà 阿坝

Āchái Province 阿柴州

Āchái 阿柴, 阿豺 (younger brother of Shùluògān)

Āchái 阿柴 (ancient ethnonym for the Tǔyùhún)

Ālā Lake 阿拉湖

Āndōng 安东

B

Báilán de míngyì jí qí dìwàng 白兰的名义及其地望

Báilán kǎo 白兰考

Báilán 白兰

Báilánguó dìbiàn 白兰国地辨

Bālán 巴兰

Bālóng 巴隆

Bāyánkālā Mountain 巴颜喀喇山

Běi Shǐ - tǔyùhún zhuàn 北史-吐谷浑传

Běi Wèi - nán qí shíqí xíngshì 北魏-南齐时期形势

Běishā 北沙

Bù'érhànbùdá 布尔汗布达

Bùlúntái 布伦台

Bǔyān Tiēmù'ěr 卜烟帖木尔

C

Cáirénbālì 才仁巴力

Cáo Ān 曹安

Cèfǔ yuánguī 册府元龟

Cháhànwūsū 察汗乌苏

Chákǎ 茶卡

Cháwūsū 察乌苏

Cházhèn 察镇

Chéng Qǐjùn 程起骏

Chéngfèng Garrison 承凤戍

Chílǐng 赤岭

Chónglì Temple 崇立寺

Chúlākè'ālāgān River Valley 除拉克阿拉干河沟

Chúmǎkē 除玛柯

Cóng Zhé 聪喆

Cuòmùcèfēng 措木策峰

D

Dàmǔ Bridge 大母桥

Dāngjīn 当金

Dàngqǐ 宕岂

Dǎngxiàng 党项

Dào Xuǎn 道宣

Délǐnghā 德令哈

Délǔbànjīn 德律半金

Déshèng 德胜

Dī 氏

Dìngyáng 定阳

Dūlán xiàn zhì 都兰县志

Dūlán 都兰

Dūnhuáng 敦煌

Duōmí 多弥

Dùzhōuchuān 度周川

F

Fàn Wénlán 范文澜

Former Qín 前秦

Fú Luó 伏罗

Fúliánchóu 伏连筹

Fúluò 伏罗

Fúluòchuān 伏罗川

Fúqǐqiánguī 伏乞乾归

Fúsì City 伏俟城

G

Gānsù 甘肃

Gāochàng 高昌
Gé'ěrmù 格尔木
Gōng Sūnyuán 公孙渊
Gònghé 共和
Gōulǐ 沟里
Gù Jiégāng 顾颉刚
Gǔngá 滚嘎
Guō Mòruò 郭沫若
Guǒluò 果洛

H

Hǎinán 海 南; i.e., Hǎinán Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
海南藏族自治州
Hǎinán Héqǔ 海南河曲
Hǎixī 海西; i.e., Hǎixī Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous
Prefecture 海西蒙古族藏族自治州
Hàn 汉
Hédōng Village 河东村
huálǐ 华里
Huáng Hào 黄颢
Huángyuán County 湟源县
Huángzhōng 湟中
Huìshēng 惠生

J

Jiànzàn 坚赞
Jiāng Cóng 姜聪
jǐnfēng 谨封
jīngzhé 惊蛰
Jìn shū 晋书
Jiù táng shū 旧唐书

K

Kāiyuán 开元
Kǎsīkǒu 卡斯口
Kēshàngtú 科尚图
King Níng 宁王
King of Mòhè 莫贺王
Kǒng Xiànwén 孔宪文
Kuānlǚ 夸吕
Kūnlún 昆仑
Kuòduān 阔端
Kuòkuòchū 阔阔出

L

Lèdū 乐都
lěngshān 冷杉
Lǐ Wénshí 李文实
Liáng shū zhǔyì zhuàn 梁书诸夷传
Liángzhōu 凉州
Liǎodōng 辽东
Lièbā 列巴
Liú Bǐngdé 刘秉德
Lóng Mountains 陇山
Lóng 陇
Lǚ Jiànfú 吕建福
Lùsī 露斯

M

Mǎduō 玛多
Mángyá 茫崖
Matsuda Hisao 松田寿男
Mò Hùbá 莫护拔
Mòhè 莫贺
Mùguī 慕璿
Mùhè 慕贺
Mùhèchuān 慕贺川
Mùlìyán 慕利延, 木利延,

Mùróng Wěi 慕容廆

Mùróng 慕容

Mùyì 木弈

Nán Mountains 南山

N

Náncháo 南朝

Nàrán 那然

Niú Yǒngtài 牛永泰

Niú Zǐwén 牛子文

Northern Liáng 北凉

Q

Qaidam (Cháidámù) 柴达木

Qaidam River 柴达木河

Qià'ná Duōjiē 恰纳多杰

Qiāng 羌

Qiěmò 且末

Qǐlián Mountains 祁连山

Qīnghǎi 青海

Qīnghǎi cōng 青海骢

Qǔmálái 曲麻莱

Qūzhēnchuān 屈真川

R

Rèshuǐ 热水

Riyuè Pass 日月关

Riyuè Township 日月乡

S

Sāli Wèiwù'ér 撒利畏兀儿

Shànchéng 鄯城

Shànshàn 鄯善

Shèguī 涉归

Shìjiā fāng zhì 释迦方志

Shìpí 视罽

Shíyín 拾寅

Shuài Yì King 率义王

Shùluògān 树洛干

Sìchuān 四川

Sīmǎ Yì 司马懿

Sòng shū: xiānbēi tǔyùhún zhuàn 宋书 鲜卑吐谷浑传

Sòng Yún 宋云

Southern Liáng 南凉

Southern Yān 南燕

Suí shū 隋书

Sūnbō 孙波

Sūnzǐ bīngfǎ 孙子兵法

Suǒnánzàngbǔ 索南藏卜

Sūpí Country 苏毗国

T

Tánggǔlā 唐古拉

Táo River 洮水

Tènggé'ěr 腾格尔

Tiěkuí 铁奎

Tóngdé 同德

Tǔbō 吐蕃

Tūfā Nùtán 秃发傉檀

Tūfā Wūgū 秃发乌孤

Tuōsù Lake 托素湖

Tǔyán 吐延

Tǔyùhún 吐谷浑

Tǔyùhún shǐ 吐谷浑史

Tǔyùhún sì dà shù chéng 吐谷浑四大戍城

Tǔyùhún yú báilán 吐谷浑与白兰

W

Wáng Ruìqín 王瑞琴
Wèi Emperor Jìn 魏晋王
Wényì 闻义
Western Jìn 西晋
Western Qín 西秦
Wōkuòtái 窝阔台
Wǔdài huìyào 五代会要
Wūgēdī 乌纥堤
Wūlán 乌兰

X

Xià 夏
Xiānbēi 鲜卑
Xiāngri dé 香日德
Xiàrihā 夏日哈
Xiátán 下滩
Xīfān 西蕃
Xīn táng shū 新唐书
Xīnghǎi 兴海
Xīníng 西宁
Xīnjiāng 新疆
Xióng 熊
Xiùgōu River 秀沟河
Xǔ Xīnguó 许新国
Xúnhuà 循化

Y

Yamaguchi Mizuo 山口瑞风
Yángguān 阳关
yázhàng 衙帐
Yèyán 叶延
Yífúwúdí State 乙弗无敌国
Yīnshān 阴山
Yǒngjiā 永嘉
Yuán shǐ, yīng zōng jì 元史, 英宗记

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Yùgùzú 裕固族

Yùshù 玉树

yǔshuǐ 雨水

Yútán 于阗

Z

Zhāmálóng 扎麻隆

Zhāng Dézǔ 张得祖

Zhào Bànglún 赵邦伦

Zhōngguó shǐgǎo dìtújí 中国史稿地图集

Zhōngguó tōngshǐ jiǎnbiān 中国通史简编

Zhōnghuá shūjú 中华书局

Zhōu Tài 周泰

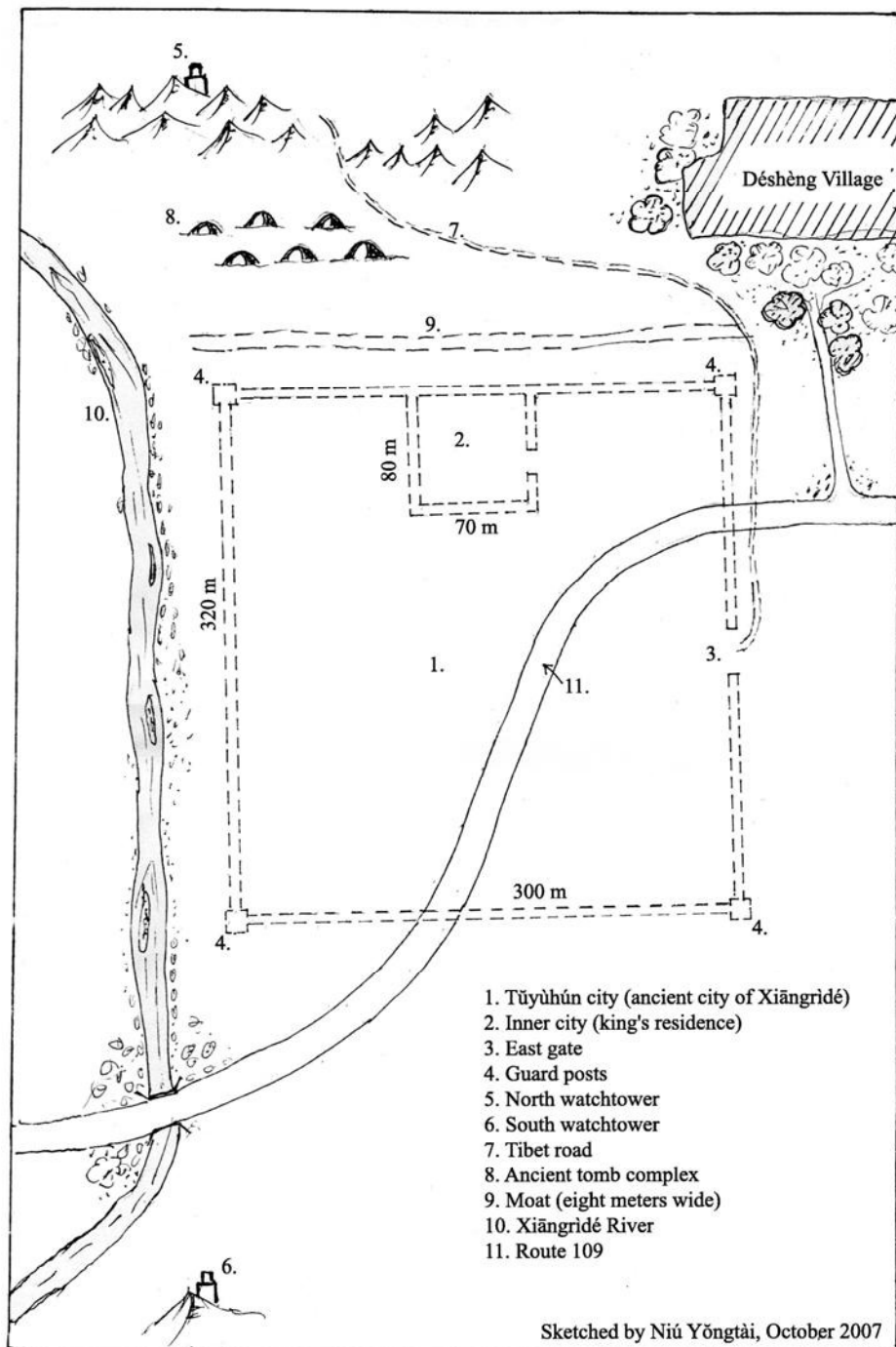
Zhōu Wéizhōu 周伟洲

Zhū Shìkuí 朱世奎

Zīzhì Tōngjiàn 资治通鉴

Zōngjiā 宗家

ANCIENT XIĀNGRÌDÉ



Sketched by Niú Yǒngtài, October 2007

PHOTOGRAPHS²⁶

Figure One. The southern watchtower is on the outskirts of Xiāngrìdé Township.



²⁶ All photographs were taken by Elena Mckinlay in January 2010.

Figure Two. A closer view of the watchtower.

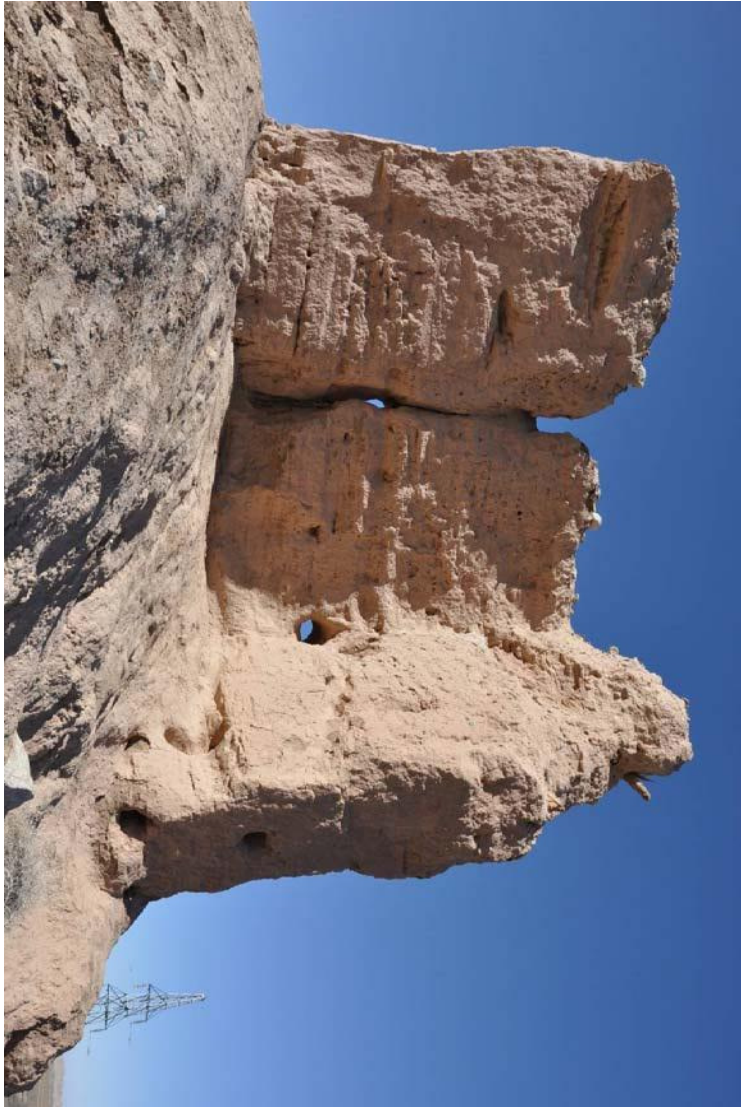


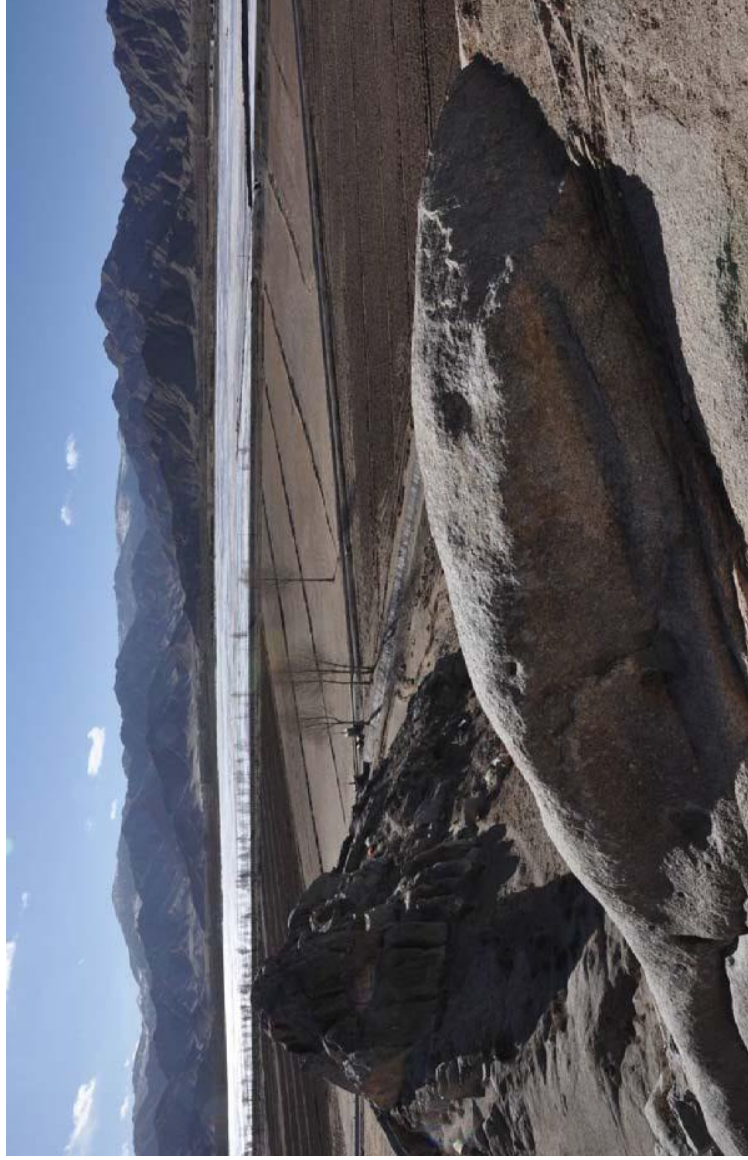
Figure Three. The figure in this image gives a sense of scale.



Figure Four. Looking south from the watchtower toward the Xiānggrǐdé River.



Figure Five. Looking south from the watchtower toward the Xiāngrǐdé River.



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